



Bell ringer: JoAnn Adams, a member of St. John Lutheran Church, rings her bell at Kmart in Farmington Hills.

Volunteers have a ball ringing bell

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
tsmith@ee.homecomm.net

All over Farmington and Farmington Hills, holiday shoppers are being greeted by folks ringing bells for the Salvation Army.

Most are paid an hourly fee to do it. But there's a notable exception. Volunteer Denny Mahle of Farmington and others from St. John's Lutheran Church are — for free — helping ring up contributions for needy people outside the Kmart store at Grand River-Halsted.

"It's about the best year we've ever had" in terms of sheer numbers of volunteers at the location, said Mahle, noting that close to 90 people are sharing bell-ringing duties.

That's an increase from last year, when about 80 people at the location helped collect \$4,600 in their red kettles.

"Right now I'm averaging 20 people per night (working) one-hour shifts," Mahle said.

And some are returning several times to help. The bell ringers will be stationed in front of Kmart and other area stores through Christmas Eve. (Call the Salvation Army of Farmington Hills at 248-477-1153 for a schedule.)

"It's snowballing because everybody's having a great time," said Mahle, explaining why more people than ever are volunteering to work at the Kmart station. "And they're only doing it for an hour."

Mahle, coordinator for the Kmart station, said some Farmington High School students originally participated as part of their community service requirement.

"But they're coming back because they had so much fun," he said. "And they're bringing their friends and family units, too."

Shoppers are really getting into the giving spirit.

"We have drive-by giving sometimes. They'll stop the car, roll down the window and give you some money."

Other area bell-ringing locations have also been successful, including outside the Farmer Jack store on Farmington-Nine Mile roads.

Mahle said volunteers from the Redford Township Unicycle Club came out Saturday, Dec. 11, to hold down the fort.

■ **'It's snowballing because everybody's having a great time.'**

Denny Mahle
—St. John's

Sheriff prepares boot camp for women

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER
pmurphy@ee.homecomm.net

When the late John F. Nichols initiated the Oakland County Boot Camp in 1990, no women were allowed.

Not that the late sheriff was a male chauvinist. He ordered feasibility studies for making the boot camp coeducational, but resources were limited and the logistics considerable.

Criminologists insist boot camps for female offenders are significantly different, requiring vastly different approaches.

By next month, however, the Oakland Boot Camp expects to admit its first class of female trainees.

"Our drill instructors (DIs) are in training right now," said Sheriff Michael J. Bouchard. "We expect to go coeducational as we have six or eight offenders (the minimal amount needed for a class)."

Oakland's boot camp has been deemed highly successful by those closest to it, including many of the hundreds of trainees who have gone through the eight weeks of physical exercise, work details, class work and discipline.

"We've had some trainees come back years later and thank us for being so tough," Sgt. Michael Johnson, a DI at the boot camp in Auburn Hills. "For some, it's the first taste of discipline they've experienced in their lives."

Bouchard said the boot camp is feasible, in part, because of the increasing number of young females getting in trouble with the law. Like their male counterparts, female offenders who meet the physical requirements

will have the choice of eight weeks of boot camp or a much longer stint in the Oakland County jail.

"We'll try it," Bouchard said. Young women can probably benefit from rigid discipline the same as the men, he said.

Female trainees will have separate living quarters, according to the sheriff. But they will share some work details — as well as physical training — with the men.

Female trainees will constitute the first or primary presence of women at the boot camp. Until she transferred out earlier this year, Donna Johnson, a former Army sergeant and the mother of two small children, was a DI on the night shift.

More female DIs are on the way, however. A class of 12 prospective DIs were scheduled to graduate from Oakland's training program Friday — including four women.

Police

from page A1

executives and city officials. "It's amazing to me how this group of individuals came together quickly."

The experience was not without its tough times, Connor said. He talked about the effort it took to complete the reading, research, term papers and other assignments, along with the continued burdens of the command positions they held within their departments.

It was like taking seven college courses, simultaneously.

"For those who hadn't seen the inside of a classroom for many years," Connor said, "the reintroduction to the learning process did not come without pain."

While a lot of the class time was on-duty, Connor and the other officers also spent many late nights catching up on the work they missed while at school. For him, the effort was worth whatever pain it caused.

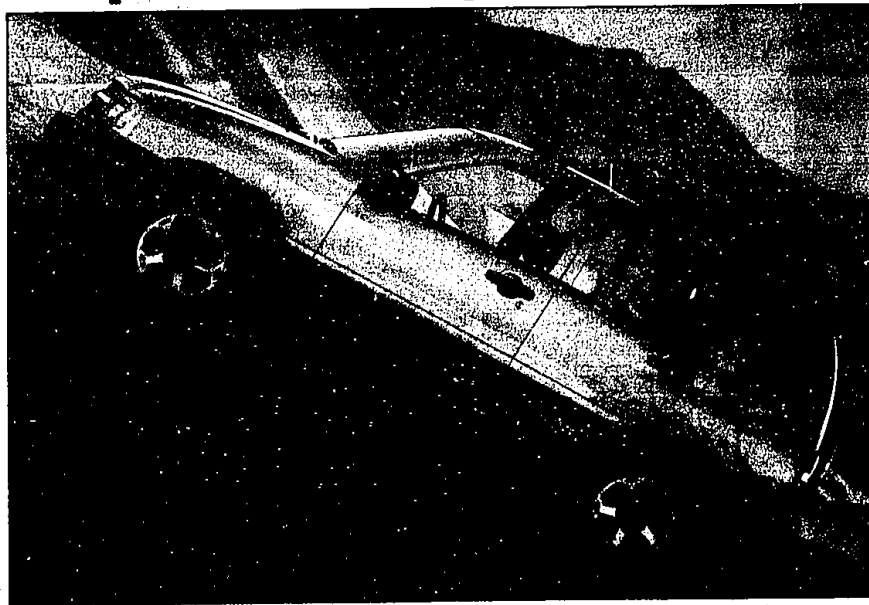
"This is the finest law enforcement managerial training program in the country," he said. "I'm administrative sergeant and the training function falls under my command. It's part of my job."

Connor appears to have done more than his job with the 132nd class of command school graduates, however. In addition to serving as class president, he received the Franklin M. Kreml Leadership Award, named in honor of the Traffic Institute's founder.

While he accepted the congratulations of his colleagues and peers after the ceremony, Connor didn't have much time to hang around the country club.

"I'm on my way back to work to catch up on a lot of the stuff I've missed," he said.

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